

From social awkwardness to music idols: selected reviews of anime series

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Introduction

This 63-page e-book consists of six chapters about [social awkwardness in anime](#), reviews of four anime series ([Edens Zero](#), [Spy x Family](#), [Skip and Loafer](#), and [Oshi No Ko](#)), and [girls with guns anime](#). All these chapters were posted on my personal WordPress blog [in December 2022](#), [January 2023](#), [February 2023](#), [March 2023](#), [July 2023](#), and [August 2023](#). Four were all published originally in *Pop Culture Maniacs*, while the other two were published elsewhere.

I did some spell-check and other revisions to ensure this text made sense, and to correct any errors that I made in the original text, which comes to over 15,000 words! Otherwise, the text is almost the same. Happy Reading!

- Burkely

Chapter One: Examining Socially Awkward Anime Characters



Komi uses a finger gun during a scene in Komi Can't Communicate

Recently, there have been more socially awkward anime characters than before, which I've noticed as a casual anime watcher. Curious about it, I decided to check out some of these series and offer my thoughts.

Socially awkward characters have appeared throughout anime. There are even lists of [shy](#), [lonely](#), and [socially anxious](#) characters. These characters are either protagonists or have supporting roles. Their social struggles often become a key part of each story.

I will look at over 20 socially awkward anime characters. The characters mentioned in this article are only a sample of a wider phenomenon. Many anime characters are insecure, quiet, don't like being around other people, or keep to themselves. I've only chosen characters in shows that I have watched to date.

This post contains some spoilers for each series I am writing about. With that, let me get started!

Komi Can't Communicate



Tadano (right) tries to introduce Komi (left) to a new friend, Katai

The protagonist of *Komi Can't Communicate*, Shoko Komi (voiced by Aoi Koga) may be the most well-known socially awkward anime character. She suffers from extreme social anxiety and struggles to communicate. She often writes what she is thinking in a notebook.

This clashes with the fact that since she is stoic and very attractive, she remains very popular. She has been a big reason why the anime has garnered a huge fanbase. There are over 170,000 followers across three subreddits related to the series or the original manga. In the series itself, she can speak somewhat awkwardly when talking on the phone.

Through the anime she has a goal to have over 100 friends by high school graduation. She is getting closer to reaching that goal. Her first friend is a fellow protagonist named Hitohito Tadano (voiced by Gakuto Kajiwarra). He often helps her communicate with others.

The series does an excellent job of showing her anxiety, through her behaviors and emotions, noting how others around her perceive them. Komi is openly described as socially anxious. As the narrator says from time to time, "When a person has extreme social anxiety, they

struggle to communicate with others. Bear in mind, they only struggle to form connections, it doesn't mean they don't want to." That's something which rings true.

Aharen-san wa Hakarenai



Raido (left) and Reina (right) rapping together in an attempt to communicate with one another better.

This romantic comedy centers on Raidō (voiced by Takuma Terashima) who has trouble making friends. He attempts to talk to his classmate, Reina Aharen (voiced by Inori Minase), but believes that she is ignoring him. He later comes to the realization that his fellow classmates had pushed her away. They thought she was timid, clingy, and awkward. In an attempt to bridge the gap, he tries to make Reina be more social and become her friend by any means necessary.

Raidō and Reina are different than Komi. Neither has social anxiety. Instead, Reina speaks softly and Raido's face is naturally unfriendly. She has trouble telling if she enters someone's personal space. As the anime goes forward, they become better friends. They meet other nervous characters like Mitsuki Oshiro (voiced by M • A • O), a nervous girl and childhood friend of Reina who has a crush on her.

Later, Raidō and Reina try and communicate better by rapping. To hammer the point home, Reina rides on fidget spinners in the ED. They have [been purported](#) to calm down those

with ADHD or autism, even though [experts reject](#) those claims. At one point, Reina becomes obsessed, trying to perform tricks and causing little kids to become jealous.

Raidō often struggles to beat Reina in any game and continues to have misconceptions about her. This goes as far as thinking Reina is a delinquent. Although I haven't read the original manga by Asato Mizu, it likely has similar themes. Her other manga, *Denkigai no Honya-san*, also features a shy character and may focus on social awkwardness as well.

Kaguya-sama: Love Is War



This ongoing anime is a combination of romantic comedy, slice-of-life, and psychological fiction. It features an introverted, inward-looking protagonist: Yu Ishigami (voiced by Ryōta Suzuki). He has a dark-haired emoish haircut with bangs covering one eye. He is often in his own world. Even so, he keenly observes people. Still, his words clash with those on the Student Council when he points out inconvenient or uncomfortable facts.

Yu remains afraid that Kaguka will murder him. She sometimes threatens him through her looks or comments, especially related to her crush, student president Miyuki Shirogane. Additionally, Chika sometimes beats him up when he says inappropriate things.

Due to his sense of observation, he is one of the anime's smartest characters. He has extra skills with using numbers as the Student Council treasurer. His taciturn behavior, negative

thoughts, and lack of presence, as the manga's author [described him](#), are only part of him. It does not prevent him from going on dates or developing feelings for other students. He fits right into the student council as Kaguka is hypersensitive, Shirogane is not skilled with ordinary things, and Chika is prideful.

By the show's third, and current, season, his bangs no longer cover his eyes. It might be a sign that he is surer of himself and not as brooding and inward looking. After all, Amethyst in *Steven Universe* went from having her bangs cover one of her eyes to having both eyes uncovered as she gained more confidence by the final season.

In fact, in the most recent episode of *Kaguya-sama: Love Is War*, he took the initiative. He was less socially awkward than in the past, even though this annoyed the others on the festival planning committee. He used his expertise to shoot down their ideas.

In the Heart of Kunoichi Tsubaki



Rindou nervously introduces herself to the village

The sixth episode of this ongoing comedy series, based on the manga of the same name by Sōichirō Yamamoto, introduced Rindou (voiced by Konomi Kohara). Despite prodding of those around her, she refuses to remove her mask, saying she's ashamed of her cute face. She will be a recurring character in this anime and may have a bigger role in later episodes.

Her characteristics align with others who are socially awkward. She doesn't know how to talk to the girls in the village and comes from a village populated only by men. This makes her like the [technowizard princess](#), Entrapta, [who is sweet and autistic](#). She also wears a mask to hide herself from others, to be within her personal world.

You could argue that Rindou, like Entrapta, is masking herself, in that she is hiding her possible autism to fit in [at the risk of burnout](#) or extreme stress. It is something which [much of the art](#) created by neurotypical people responds to. It connects with the idea that disabilities are people's superheroes. This idea could be liberating to some, but ultimately is limiting.

In the seventh episode, Rindou practices taking off her mask, wanting to fit in more. While some of the girls plot to have her remove her mask, Tsubaki reassures her, telling her that she should do it at her own pace and not force it. After the scheme by the girls is fooled, she takes off the mask and reveals her face. She is later shown with the mask, which came from the head of her previous village, on the side of her head. She tries to get closer to those in the town, even while Sazanka is jealous of how close Tsubaki and Rindou are getting.

Love Live! Nijigasaki High School Idol Club



Rina hiding her face with her notebook

This music series, part of the Love Live! franchise focused on music idols, tends to have more extroverted and few socially awkward characters. One exception is shy library reader Hanamaru Kunikida in *Love Live! Sunshine!!* who is a gregarious introvert. More pronounced is Rina Tennoji (voiced by Chiemi Tanaka) in the ongoing series, *Love Live! Nijigasaki High School Idol Club*, who often is too shy to show her face and covers it with a small notebook with face expressions.

This goes one step further: she wears a small monitor in front of her face and cat-eared headphones during live shows. She has a developed knowledge from taking information processing courses. Occasionally she reveals her face to people, but only in specific instances. Unsurprisingly, she's described as a "face-hiding type school idol".

Hiding the face is a form of masking. It can refer to someone changing their personality to conform to harassment, abuse, or social pressures, including [hiding signs of autism](#). In the case of Rina, she is doing a bit of the latter, as a person who is somewhat socially awkward. Komi also hides her face partially with her notebook. So, it is not unique to Rina.

In some ways, Rina is like the masked samurai in *Fena: Pirate Princess*, Yukimaru Sanada. He's introverted but leads a group of samurai who tries to keep the series protagonist, Fena, safe from any harm. Unlike Rina, he does not sing. Predictably, he falls in love with Fena, and confesses his love for her in the final episode.

Hitori Bocchi no Marumaru Seikatsu



Hitori struggles to introduce herself to her homeroom class in the first episode

This 2019 slice-of-life comedy centers around a girl named Bocchi Hitori (voiced by Chisaki Morishita). She has social anxiety and struggles with talking to others. After Kai ends their friendship, she decides to make friends with everyone in her class. But she has one problem: every time she gets excited, she passes out. This is compounded by her struggle to communicate (like Komi)!

She isn't alone in this. One of her classmates, Ito Kuri (voiced by Honoka Kuroki), who is a student librarian, is also shy. She gets her first friend by accident, Nako Sunao (voiced by Minami Tanaka) when they share an umbrella after school.

As the anime goes forward, Bocchi gains more friends, and becomes more confident in herself. She becomes friends with a supposed "loser" (Aru Honshō), a person who thinks they are a ninja (Sotoka Rakita), and a lover of sweets (Peko Onaka). She also becomes friendly with a kid who comes from a wealthy family (Mayo Ojōsa), and many others.

She encounters a stumbling block in Kako Kurai (voiced by Kana Ichinose). Kako has a personal policy against becoming friends as she wants to be strong by herself. She slowly comes around to Bocchi by the anime's end. Over the course of the anime, Bocchi learns more about

herself and what it means to make friends. It's a good anime for those who are socially awkward or struggle to keep friendships.

Mitsuboshi Colors



Yui, one of the protagonists of Mitsuboshi Colors, acting nervously

Since the manga's author, Katsuwo, also wrote *Hitori Bocchi no Marumaru Seikatsu*, it's no surprise that this 2018 slice-of-life comedy anime has similar themes. The main character, Yui Akamatsu (voiced by Yuki Takada) is extremely shy. Even so, she leads a group of three girls in elementary school, including herself, Saki Kise (Sat-chan), and Kotoha Aoyama, called the "Colors." They work together to protect the peace in the town, performing errands and deeds. A pandalike cat they name "Colonel Monochrome" often goes with them.

Despite being shy, she is the most level-headed of the three protagonists as they go on with their adventures. She sometimes utters her catchphrase, "Trigonometric functions!" This earns her the respect of Saito, a local police officer. He sees her as the most reasonable of the Colors. Even so, she often goes along with the schemes of Sat-chan and Kotoha.

Unlike other characters in this post, Yui is only shy. She isn't socially anxious. During her adventures, she can easily converse with people in town. Her shyness is like Aoi Futaba in *Princess Connect! Re:Dive*. She is diametrically different from Fafnir in *Miss Kobayashi's*

Dragon Maid. Fafnir is a dragon who acts cold toward others, is disdainful, and distrusts humans.

Although she often wears a star on her shirt, like Steven Universe, she isn't autistic coded like him. That's because she doesn't always have as much self-confidence. She also doesn't experience any traumatic situations like Steven. Despite this, both share one characteristic: living relatively care-free lives. This is more of the case for Yui than for Steven.

Märchen Mädchen



Hazuki nervous after receiving the book which allows her to enter the alternate world

In some ways, Hazuki Kagimura (voiced by Tomori Kusunoki) is like Bocchi or Yui. She is socially inept and shy. As such, she has very few friends or anyone she loves. Not surprisingly, she immerses herself in her imagination and story books, which she calls "Story Syndrome," as a big fan of fantasies.

One day, she follows a figure to a mysterious library and arrives in another world. She enrolls in a magic academy so she can become a mage (a *madchen*)! Although she puts this on hold for a time, she later comes back.

Despite her clear social awkwardness, a book chooses her. She becomes a friend of Shizuka Tsuchimikado, with her [attraction](#) to Shizuka growing throughout the anime. By the series ends, both are either on the road to a relationship or in a relationship.

Significantly, Hazuki writes her own story. She gains her own special powers, deciding her own destiny. These powers include the ability to create a castle, a servant, change feelings of someone, or even make any wish come true.

She is not alone as a socially awkward character. Mai Sadohora (voiced by Hiyori Nitta) is shy, but dislikes malice. She knows karate and self-defense through martial arts. There is some fan service in this anime and other issues, like occasional partial nudity of the protagonist. It is something which would require a longer review to dive deeper into the series.

In certain ways, she might share some characteristics with Kana Nakamachi. The latter character is a soft-spoken shy girl, who is often frightened, and protagonist of *Kanamemo*, a slice-of-life yuri comedy. Unlike Kana, she is older and has more friends.

Asobi Asobase



The Student Council president rejects the typical inappropriate antics of the Pastimers Club

This 2018 surreal comedy is bizarre and made me laugh a lot at its often-absurd antics. In this milieu is one character only named "Student Council President" (voiced by Honoka Inoue). Embodying the stereotype of a shy girl with glasses, she is often quiet. She only got the position after a speech by the beauty-obsessed Vice President appeared to be threatening.

Furthermore, she tries to limit the generally irresponsible Pastimers Club, comprised of the show's three protagonists, Hanako Honda, Olivia and Kasumi Nomura. She vacillates between wanting to be friends with them and trying to undermine the club. At times, she can appear to be terrifying or condescending when she is trying to act compassionately.

The Student Council President is not socially awkward like characters in recent Western animations like [*Inside Job*](#), [*The Owl House*](#), [*Cleopatra in Space*](#), *Steven Universe*, or *She-Ra and the Princesses of Power*. Nor does she have a gentle or cool personality like characters in *A Centaur's Life*. Instead, she shares some characteristics with Hougetsu Shimamura in *Adachi and Shimamura*, who thinks socializing is troublesome. However, she doesn't focus on taking care of other people and her personality isn't as innocent.

Her character is right at home in this anime. There are characters who are childish, pretend to be something they aren't, shoot laser beams out of their butt, love the occult, and are otakus.

YuruYuri



Rise leans against her senpai, Nana

This slice-of-life yuri comedy, the title which literally translates to "Easygoing Yuri", which ran from 2011-2012, 2015, ended far too soon. One socially awkward character stands out: Rise Matsumoto (voiced by Saori Gotō). Even as the head of the student council, she has very little presence. She speaks so softly that only one person can understand her: Nana Nishigaki (voiced by Ryoko Shiraishi), a teacher at the middle school. As a result, she has become the "explosive friend" of Nana, as she suffers from Nana's explosions.

Nana, who is more outgoing, is like Professor Farnsworth in *Futurama* or Heinz Doofenshmirtz in *Phineas & Ferb*. In another, she is akin to Raido in *Aharen-san wa Hakarenai* in that she can understand what Aharen-san is saying, even when others can't. The camaraderie that Nana and Rise have together is one of the best parts of the show.

She has no zany catchphrases or wild actions like Peridot in *Steven Universe*, a character [often interpreted](#) as autistic. The former is directly the case for the show's protagonist, Akari Akaza. Supposedly the main protagonist, Akari has a lack of presence unlike other characters, who comedically tease her about it.

Rise and Akari are joined by uptight and tsundere (Ayano Sugiura) or cold and distant (Chizuru Ikeda) characters. Akari nor Rise is non-talkative, making them different than the Demon Lord in [The Great Jahy Will Not Be Defeated!](#), to give an example.

Akebi's Sailor Uniform



Akebi (left) and Minoru (right) people watching and taking notes

This recently ended slice-of-life series, with some yuri undertones, centers around Komichi Akebi (voiced by Manatsu Murakami). She attends school in sailor attire. However, the dress code of Roubai Girls' Academy, an all-girls private school, has people wear blazers instead. In the process, she stands out. Even so, she makes new friends with her bubbly personality, including some socially awkward characters.

This includes an inquisitive girl named Minoru Okuma (voiced by Konomi Kohara) who does not like to socialize. Instead, she prefers to observe other people and take notes, hoping she can use it someday. She enjoys taking notes about animal life. Then there's Tomono Kojou (voiced by Shion Wakayama) who is quiet, shy, and a bookworm. Not surprisingly, she spends a lot of time in the library as a member of the literature club at Roubai Girls' Academy.

They are joined by Ayumi Tougeguchi (voiced by Shiori Mikami), a loner and roommate of Okuma. She suffers from anxiety so severe she has to take medication. In the latter, Akebi even aids her. Despite all this, she is a member of the school's table tennis club.

Okuma, Kojou, and Tougeguchi fit in with other students who either sleep a lot, are self-conscious, or are stoic. Although I have gripes with problematic fan service in this series, this series is mostly wholesome. These characters are part of that.

Azumanga Daioh



Sakaki struggles to talk about cats to her fellow classmates

This classic 2002 slice-of-life and surreal comedy has a host of socially awkward characters. Most prominent is the tall and soft-spoken girl, Sakaki (voiced by Yū Asakawa), who is uncomfortable with herself. This shyness manifests itself in her seldom speaking. Her reticence to say words is seen as cool or mysterious, even though it isn't. This contrasts with her

love of cute things, like cats and cat-related paraphernalia. Sometimes she shakes when nervous, like Komi, although not as uncontrollably.

Her expressions are often misinterpreted. For instance, Kagura tries to "protect" her from cats which bite her on her hand. In fact, she only wants to pet cats on their heads. As such, she is similar to Fumi Manjōme in the coming-of-age yuri anime *Sweet Blue Flowers* or Sue Mitama in the slice-of-life supernatural comedy anime, *A Centaur's Life*.

Azumanga Daioh gained a significant following due its majority female cast. No one objectifies or demeans any other character. The series also has a queer audience because Kaorin has a huge crush on Sakaki.

Apart from Sakaki there is Ayumu "Osaka" Kasuga. On the surface she might as an easily distracted and slow girl. Her mind functions differently from other people. The child prodigy, Chiyo Mihama, recognizes this. She is as smart as another socially awkward character, Chloe in *We Bare Bears*. There's also the awkward and strange ephebophilic teacher, Kimura, which some call pedophilic. [Others](#) say he could be a parody of the magazine that the manga, which the series is based on, ran in.

Closing thoughts

There are many other examples of shy and socially awkward anime characters. Take for example Belphegor in *As Miss Beelzebub Likes*, Yui Yamada in *Kase-San*, and Sumi Sakurasawa in *Rent-A-Girlfriend*. Additionally, Ian Stuart in *My Next Life as a Villainess: All Routes Lead to Doom!*, and two characters in *Strawberry Panic!*, Hikari Konohana and Kagome Byakudan, are shy, timid, and socially awkward.

Even so, [some argued](#) that autism awareness in Japan is lagging, with no series having an autistic protagonist. Unlike Western TV series, none of these characters are portrayed at "[cartoonish extremes](#)" or have their social awkwardness as a "superpower".

There are many more socially awkward characters in Western animation. There's [a character](#) in the upcoming *Dead End: Paranormal Park*. All the *Steven Universe* characters [were described](#) as neurodivergent by series creator Rebecca Sugar. But that's a discussion for another day.

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Chapter Two: English Sub Season Review: Eden's Zero Season One



In this sci-fi anime, *Eden's Zero*, follow Shiki and his friends on a journey across the galaxy to find all four sisters and give the Edens Zero battleship its full power. On the way, they encounter a player who murders people in a virtual world, a devious hacker, a power-hungry leader, and a person who can see the future.

The first twelve episodes of this series introduced a young boy named Shiki Granbell (Sean Chiplock), who meets the equivalent of a YouTuber, Rebecca Bluegarden (Kira Buckland) and her cat companion, Happy (Tia Ballard), as they search through time and space for a being called “Mother” (Colleen Clickenbeard), with Shiki trying to make as many friends as he can. This space romp continues the story of Shiki, Rebecca, and Happy, with some comparing it to earlier works by Hiro Mashima like *Fairy Tail* and *Rave Master*, as their crew continues to expand. The entire English VA cast moves the series forward with its energy, radiance, and exuberance.

The animation of this series from J.C.Staff is smooth and captivating, especially in battle scenes. It continues to astound, especially with new opening and closing themes beginning with episode 13 and moving forward. There are colorful characters, backgrounds, and animation which often blows you away. This includes the introduction of the wealthy sector of the planet

Sun Jewel in the later part of the season. The show's second opening theme is "Forever" by L'Arc-en-Ciel, and the second ending theme is "Sekai no Himitsu." J.C.Staff is known for producing well-known series like *A Certain Scientific Railgun*, *Revolutionary Girl Utena*, and *Azumanga Daioh*.

There is the typical storytelling device of a narrator named Xiaomei (Jenny Yokobori). She is the Time Oracle and presides over the Temple of Knowledge on the Planet of Time. She knows everything in the universe and has future-vision a little like Garnet in *Steven Universe*, as she knows that the future branches out in various possibilities. She is weirdly obsessed with putting her visitors through battles, not knowing their outcome. She spends most of her time in the series as a narrator from the audience, not unlike the Watcher in *What If...*?

I found the episodes where Shiki and his friends go to Digitalis, a virtual planet/dimension, interesting. This isn't because Pino chooses to be a human, Homura chooses a male avatar, or Weisz a female avatar, the latter two choosing avatars different from their original genders. Rather, it is due to the setting itself, it seems to be applying to those who play with virtual reality or online multiplayer games. Specifically, Shiki and his friends can't rewrite the code of the planet, but can use their real-world abilities, and they can log out of the game. The mix between reality and the virtual world reminds me a bit of *The Hollow*, which toyed with this concept.

Eden's Zero has similarities with other shows which have hackers, as Hermit is well-skilled at breaking into systems to help her friends. Hermit is a bit different, however, as she has a dark past. She was deceived by humans into building a cannon which obliterated another planet, and for years she is tortured by scientists for their own ends. While she is rescued from a prison, the trauma of her experience prevents her from stopping a hacker which is destroying the Edens Zero, until Rebecca connects directly with her, and Shiki tells her to believe in herself, causing her to regain some faith in humanity.

The characters of Happy, who can transform into blasters, and Pino, who has an EMP which can knock out technology for a brief period, are interesting additions as well. Perhaps it is a commentary on anime shows themselves when it turns out that the Ether Gear that Rebecca, Homura, and Shiki use do not work when your hands are tied. In contrast to other series, it is made clear that everything has a heart, no matter whether it is human or robotic. However, this also means that humans and robots can die and stop functioning.

One of the intriguing plot threads is Homura's journey. She becomes more a part of the team in these episodes, but is willing to save her friends, even from innumerable odds, like on the digital world, when she is facing a government spy, Amira (Emi Lo), who is impersonating her, and a murderer who is cheating to stay in the game. She hopes to reach her master and mother-of-sorts, Valkyrie, as part of the mission to find the goddess of the universe and struggles with facing a copy of Valkyrie when she visits the Planet of Time and thinks back to her early life. This comes to a head in episodes 19 to 25, when the crew go to the planet Sun Jewel, with wealthy and poor sectors. Whether it is like *Star Wars* and *Fairy Tail*, or not, it is a unique series in and of itself.

Homura finds out that the brutal Madame Kurenai, who won't tolerate any crime or violence on the planet, is her greedy mother, who has enforcers to keep "order" in the labor district of the planet and wants to destroy the whole district with a superweapon as it isn't profitable for her. She also discovers, to her horror, that her master is no more, and she takes time to process this, while the audience learns of how Kurenai betrayed Valkyrie, continuing to fight with encouragement from her friends. Following Kurenai's defeat by Shiki, she rejects Kurenai's plea for forgiveness and says she wants nothing to do with Kurenai. In a bit of karma, Kurenai runs into the forest and is captured by Cedric, a man whose face she burned off, and they turn her into their "pet." Homura makes peace with what happened, leaving Valkyrie behind, and decides to take on the same role as Valkyrie. Two of the shining stars, Witch and Sister, even embrace each other over the death of Valkyrie, and cry together, sad to see the loss of their friend.

There are funny parts in the series, like the different outfits the characters wear, including skimpy ones, especially embarrassing Rebecca. She is a character who changes outfits more than any other character, including when she wears an outfit from a popular anime, only to have her be embarrassed by Labilia Christy (Lizzie Freeman), an arrogant B-Cuber. She also spends time discovering her own magical powers, even using them to defeat Nino, a B-Cuber who declares that anime will save the universe, and saves the day by telling Kurenai's enforcers, known as the Punishers, to stand down.

Eden's Zero does not shy away from maturity. For instance, episode 21 has warnings for language and smoking. In other episodes, we see characters being tortured or dressed in outfits which appears to be fan service. On the other hand, Weisz, a male character, is naked in one episode, and embarrasses himself, so it's not only women who wear revealing clothes.

Additionally, there is fighting in nearly every episode, mainly led by Shiki to protect his friends, including in the final episodes of this season where Madame Kurenai fights against Shiki in a huge mecha, through the city center and into the labor district.

Score

Bubbleblabber's Review System

8.0/10

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Chapter 3: Bang, Bang, Pop!: Reviewing Girls With Guns Anime



Created in Microsoft Paint.

In recent years, there have been even more anime featuring girls with guns, expanding the genre. I decided to examine this genre and offer my thoughts.

When you think of girls with guns in popular culture, you might think of Lara Croft, Sarah Connor, *Alien*, *Foxy Brown*, or *Coffy*. However, there are more than just hundreds of films featuring girls with guns. In anime, there are [over 20](#) girls with guns series.

While there are [many](#) strong anime gunslinging girls, there aren't as many anime which are truly "girls with guns". It is a genre defined by series such as the 1980s sci-fi comedy and space opera, *Dirty Pair*, centered on two women: Kei and Yuri.

Since then, there have been many more series, including the recently-ended *Vampire in the Garden* and currently airing *Lycoris Recoil*. There are also older series such as *Gunsmith Cats*, *El Cazador de la Bruja*, *Noir*, and *Otherside Picnic*. This article reviews these six series and four others. It is sample of a much wider array of [girls with guns anime](#).

This post contains spoilers for the ten series that I'm writing about. So, without further ado, let me begin!

Girls with guns are stars of the show in Lycoris Recoil



Chisato Nishikigi defends herself from those trying to kill her in the show's sixth episode

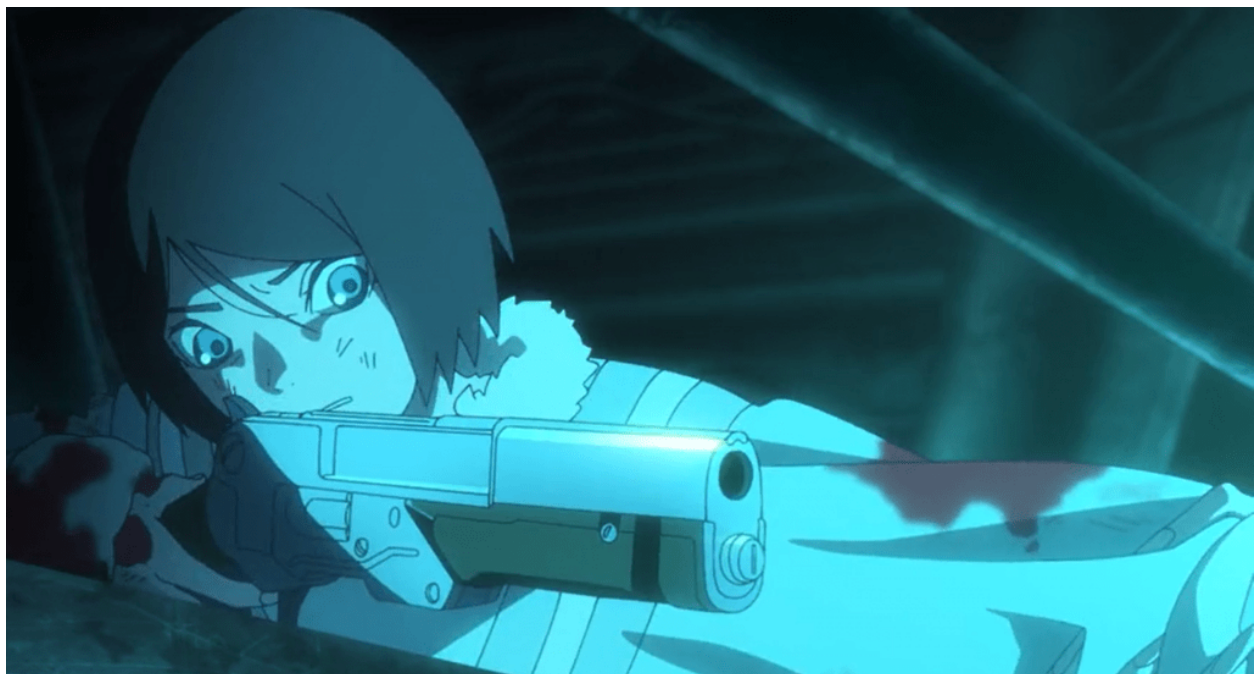
This original anime series by Spider Lily and Asaura is all the rage. The [/r/yurimemes](#) subreddit is filled with posts of Chisato (Chika Anzai) and Takina Inoue (Shion Wakayama), the show's protagonists, as is [/r/wholesomeyuri](#). The show's yuri subtext is often noted. Furthermore,

the show's subreddit, [/r/LycorisRecoil](https://www.reddit.com/r/LycorisRecoil/), has over 4500 subscribers. The show's story, characters, animation, and dialogue make it easy to like.

The series begins when Takina brazenly uses a machine gun against criminals, threatening the life of a fellow "Lycoris", an armed intelligence agent. The covert organization, Direct Attack (DA), fires her. She is then transferred to Café LycoReco, a DA front organization, where she meets Chisato, a fellow Lycoris. She also meets a former DA member named Mizuki Nakahara (Ami Koshimizu) and an Afro-Japanese man named Mika (Kosuke Sakaki) who runs the cafe.

The series pulls you in due to Takina's struggle with fellow DA agents who resent her, and villains who attempt to take down Lycoris. The same can be said about Chisato's mysterious past and a hacker named Kurumi (Misaki Kuno) joins the show's heroes. The series often focuses on growing friendship between Takina and Chisato, arguably with romantic undertones. Unlike other anime about girls with guns, Chisato only uses rubber bullets. This means that those she does not kill anyone, a practice Takina adopts, as they work together as a team.

Momo shines through in Vampire in the Garden



Momo defends herself from a vampire girl, Alicia

This original dark fantasy net anime features many girls with guns. Front and center is Momo (Megumi Han) who runs away from home, where she is a soldier, and trainee in a war against vampires. She meets Fine (Yū Kobayashi), queen of the vampires, learning to love life

and experience music all at the same time. Unfortunately, her controlling mother, Nobara (Rika Fukami) sends out a search party to find Momo. She wants to bring her "back" to "civilization" and away from the purportedly "barbaric" vampires.

In the process, Fine and Momo grow closer to one another. Like many other girls with guns anime, there are many yuri vibes in the series. In fact, neither of these protagonists gets a chance to live together. They are chased throughout the anime and do not have a chance to rest. This is because society sees relationships between humans and vampires as "unnatural" and does not accept them.

The focus on the relationship between Fine and Momo parallels those who do not accept queer relationships and those othered by society. Rather than an anime solely about girls with guns, *Vampire in the Garden* is a mature dark fantasy filled with blood, death, explosions, and serious injury. Even so, there are scenes with a slice-of-life feel. This five-episode anime ends positively. Momo founded a society many years later where humans and vampires can live together in peace.

Gunsmith Cats exemplifies the girls with guns genre



Irene "Rally" Vincent at the shooting range in the episode "[Neutral Zone](#)"

This adventure-crime series is based on an eight-volume manga of the same name illustrated, and written, by Kenichi Sonoda. It is different than other series in this post because it is loosely set in Chicago. It centers around Irene "Rally" Vincent (Michiko Neya), a 19-year-old woman who operates "Gunsmith Cats" gun shop. She works with 17-year-old explosives expert and former sex worker named "Minnie" May Hopkins (Kae Araki) as a bounty hunter in the underworld.

The anime is an original video animation (OVA), released between November 1995 and September 1996. It is only three episodes long. [Some reviewers](#) praised the animation as colorful, fun, and a "solid piece" of filmmaking. Others [praised](#) the action, artwork, and said it sounded like a "gritty" suburb of Chicago. Moreover, there were those [who described](#) the animation as smooth, said it has the same amount of humor as the original manga, but complained that the series should have been longer.

Like *Vampire of the Garden* and *Lycoris Recoil*, yuri themes are implied. Although Yuricon's founder Erica Friedman does not write about the anime on her blog, *Okazu*, she did review each volume of the five-volume manga, *Gunsmith Cats BURST*. In [her reviews](#), she notes the yuri subtext between Rally and Minnie. She also [noted](#) that mafia donna Goldie Musso is a stereotypical "evil" lesbian. In the manga, all three of them live together. Otherwise, the series fits within the girls with guns anime genre.

Love, amnesia, and guns in El Cazador de la Bruja



Nadie, Ellis, and nuns shelter in a basement, hiding for people out to get them, in an episode

This 2007 series, a mix of modern Western, adventure, and yuri, is a classic girls with guns anime. It centers around Ellis (Ai Shimizu), a fugitive who has amnesia, an unknown past, and powers of some kind, and a bounty hunter named Nadie (Shizuka Itō). Both travel south in hopes of finding the key to who Ellis is, where she was born, and what she did.

In a review of *El Cazador de la Bruja* first episode, Friedman [noted](#) that there were clear yuri vibes. But she worried there would be another "ambiguously yuri" relationship like other Madlax series. However, in a review at the end of the series, Friedman [praised](#) the growing romance between Nadie and Ellis. She said it is different [than Noir](#) in more ways than one.

[Others](#) were more critical of this series, especially purported "filler" episodes. They noted that even the show's gun violence is restrained. This series is unlike other anime in this genre as

it is set in the Southwest United States and Mexico. As a result, it shares similarities with Western animations like *Nomad of Nowhere* and *The Legend of Calamity Jane*. Both series have gun-toting female protagonists.

Girls with guns are at the center of Noir



Kirika and Marielle in the front, with Chloe in the background, in an image on [the show's now-defunct](#) official website in 2003

This adventure anime is as well-known as *El Cazador de la Bruja*. It is often noted as exemplary of the girls with guns genre in anime. It centers on two female assassins, a Corsican woman named Mireille Bouquet (Hōko Kuwashima) and a Japanese woman with amnesia, Kirika Yuumura (Kotono Mitsuishi). Both journey together to learn about their past. They ally together and assassinate "bad" people under a code name: Noir. They face a French secret organization named Les Soldats, led by Altena (Tarako), which is out to kill them, and a skilled assassin named Chloe (Aya Hisakawa).

Friedman, who I've mentioned earlier, [criticized](#) the series for weak animation at times. But she praised the show's music, settings, and yuri vibes in the series. She added that people will put up with the series, despite absurd storylines because it has an attractive woman with a gun. TV Tropes, on [a page](#) about LGBTQ fanbase of anime and manga, stated that the series garnered a

"sizable lesbian fanbase" due to the "ambiguous" relationship between Mireille and Kirika. They also noted the subtle lesbian attraction shown later.

Director Koichi Mashimo [described](#) this series, *Madlax*, and *El Cazador de la Bruja*, as his "girls-with-guns genre trilogy". Some [praised](#) the 26-episode series for redefining girls with guns series, with an elegant, and sleek story. But they criticized it for having repetitive actions sequences. Others [said](#) that *Noir* was an original anime which "stands out". In the end, the series changed the girls with guns genre for years to come, although no series since then has been exactly like it.

Girls with guns are focal point of Otherside Picnic



Sorowo aims a military-style weapon while Toriko sits next to her

This adventure sci-fi yuri series centers around two women. One is a college student named Sorowo Kamikoshi (Yumiri Hanamori) who enters parallel worlds named the Otherside. The other is the woman who saves her, a former Canadian special forces soldier named Torika Nishina (Ai Kayano). The series focuses on Nishina's quest for her friend, and their repeated

attempts to return to the Otherside to gain artifacts, with the help of Kozakura (Rina Hidaka). However, the world affects them physically and mentally in ways they didn't expect.

Early last year, I began watching this series, excited to watch it since too many yuri anime are either set in schools or fantasies, with the implication that lesbian relationships will be short-lived and even replaced by heterosexuality. Unfortunately, this series did not deliver on that promise. Friedman [criticizes](#) the series for being a "children's version of the novels". My bigger qualm is that the series did not deliver on the yuri that seemed present from the beginning, despite romantic vibes throughout.

Otherside Picnic remains within the girls with guns genre. Even in a few episodes, Sorawo and Torika save U.S. military soldiers from Okinawa who are stuck in the Otherside. Unfortunately, this becomes imperialist apologia. It glosses over problems with U.S. military occupation, [and presence](#), in Okinawa, and Japan. It marks a low point for the entire series.

Girls with guns have an important role in Blue Drop



Yūko takes out a gun to defend Mari from harm in the show's sixth episode

This 2007 yuri sci-fi drama contains some girls with guns. On the manga cover, a girl named Shōta has a gun. On the other hand, neither of the show's protagonists, Mari or Hagino, uses a gun during the series. Instead, secondary characters like Yūko and Tsubael have guns. Yūko even confronts Hagino at gunpoint. Otherwise, there are armed sentries on ships from another world.

Blue Drop delivers more on yuri themes than *Otherside Picnic* or even, arguably, *Lycoris Recoil*. And you don't even need on [yuri goggles](#) to see it. It is more than [a "fun watch"](#) with likable characters, some of whom are morally ambiguous. Instead, it is an enveloping story which draws you in, with its plot and animation. Even the ending is heartbreaking.

Since the series is usually put into the sci-fi and yuri genres, reviewers don't often put it into the girls with guns genre. Although there are fewer girls with guns in *Blue Drop* than other series noted in this article, it has positives which go beyond other series. It is a classic that can be watched over and over. The same can likely also be said about the affiliated manga which ran from 2004 to 2008.

Badass girls with guns are central to Canaan



Canaan about to fire her pistol during the show's [opening](#)

This 2009 mystery thriller is little-known, even though a Japanese game company, Type-Moon, created it. It's based on a special scenario originally outlined in 2009 game, *428: Shibuya Scramble*. This anime centers on a gun-toting assassin and mercenary named Canaan (Miyuki Sawashiro). She faces a rival named Alphard Al Sheya (Maaya Sakamoto), a skilled assassin who heads a terrorist organization named Snake. Canaan also has a pretty reporter friend named Maria Ōsawa (Yoshino Nanjō).

Canaan and Alphard are both skilled at using firearms, as is ex-mercenary Siam (Akio Ōtsuka), Alphard's lieutenant, Liang Qi (Rie Tanaka), and many others. Predictably, yuri themes are spread throughout this anime. Canaan often saves Maria from sticky situations thanks to her

ability to perceive people's emotions as colors. They [clearly](#) are attracted toward each other. The series ends with Canaan being, in the [words of Friedman](#), "awarded equal status to Maria in her heart."

Otherwise, *Canaan* is action-packed, with fast-paced fight sequences and chases. In some ways, it makes me think of chase scenes [in Carmen Sandiego](#), although the ones in that series are never filled with guns, but with other deadly weapons instead. This series is unique because Canaan is from an unnamed country in the Middle East, presumably Syria or Lebanon. It adds another dimension to the story.

Guns, love, and demons in Engage Kiss



Shu, Sharon, and Ayano pictured on the show's [official website](#).

In this ongoing, and currently airing, romantic comedy, one character stands out as a girl with a gun: Ayano Yugiri (Lynn). She is the former girlfriend of Shuu Ogata (Soma Saito). He lost his memories of their relationship after partnering with a demon named Kisara (Saya Aizawa). To give her the necessary demon powers to fight, he kisses her, which erases a memory every time he does so.

While it seems, at first, that she chooses his memories to erase at random, it is later shown that she can choose which ones to erase. She even eliminates a time that Shuu and Ayano have

sex, enjoy each other's company. She also eliminates a time when Shuu had sex with the demon-hating priest, Sharon Holygrail (Rumi Okabo), and poisoned her in a devious way.

[Ayano](#) has the most skills at using firearms apart from Shuu. It has not been revealed how she is so skilled, but she may have on-the-job experience. Unlike *Lycoris Recoil*, the only other people who use guns are the police, as the villains often manipulate demons instead. None of the show's characters are without faults, and have all likely done deplorable things.

A gun-toting protagonist in Venus Versus Virus



Lucia fires her gun in the show's [opening](#)

This dark fantasy and supernatural thriller centers around two girls with guns: Lucia Nahashi (Ayahi Takagaki) and Sumire Takahana (Minori Chihara). Although it has been rightly described as a series to avoid by Stig Høgset [of THEM Anime Reviews](#). He argued that it is "lazy and dumb", with mild fanservice and violence. That makes it different from others in this genre, which are usually more violent and bloody.

In *Venus Versus Virus*, Lucia, especially, is skilled with use of a firearm. She works to protect Sumire, along with others, from harm that demons, known as "viruses", can inflict. Predictably they both bond in the process. Even so, the yuri themes in this story are [not very strong](#), with neither Lucia nor Sumire appearing to be lesbians.

On the other hand, the series is strong as an anime that features girls with guns. As such, it is relatively well-established in the genre. In fact, when bullets hit Sumire, it causes her violent personality to surface, which can be harmful to anyone around her.

Closing thoughts

There are many other examples of girls with guns anime. Some of the most prominent, apart from *Dirty Pair*, include *Bubblegum Crisis*, *Miami Guns*, *Gunslinger Girl*, and *Burn-Up*. One critic [argued](#) that while there aren't many true girls with guns anime, the ones that do exist have been so influential, it has created "an entire thematic genre and stereotype of anime."

Princess Principal and the film, *Kite Liberator* also fall into the genre. Even *Izetta: The Last Witch* might fall into the genre since Izetta rides an anti-tank rifle. Apart from Sabine Wren, Padme Amidala, and Zam Wessell, who tote guns in the *Star Wars* franchise, there's no Western animated equivalent of the genre. On the other hand, there are some gun-wielding women elsewhere, like Millie [in Helluva Boss](#).

There are [many girls with guns](#) within anime, but even with newer series, it remains to be seen if the current trend toward more girls with guns will continue. Many of the series within the genre, such as *Strike Witches*, *Michiko & Hatchin*, *Grenadier*, and *Upotte!!* are years old. The same is the case for *Madlax*, set in the same world [as Birdie Wing](#).

With anime production companies flush with cash, there is a possibility of further girls with guns anime in the future.

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Chapter 4: Spy x Family Review



Spy x Family is an action spy comedy based on a manga by Tatsuya Endo. It is directed and written by Kazuhiro Furuhashi. It is produced by Wit Studio and CloverWorks. The latter studio is known for many series, including *Akebi's Sailor Uniform*, *My Dress-Up Darling*, *In the Heart of Kunoichi Tsubaki*, and [Bocchi the Rock!](#), which released this year. The former studio gained recognition after it produced *Attack on Titan*'s first three seasons. This review will have spoilers.

The plot of *Spy x Family* focuses on the mission of a skilled secret agent codenamed Twilight (voiced by Takuya Eguchi). He is tasked with enrolling a child in a prestigious university to spy on an important political leader as part of Operation Strix, in an effort to keep peace between two warring nations, Westalis and Ostania, an allusion to East and West Germany. To complete his task, he takes on the name of Loid Forger, adopts Anya (voiced by Atsumi Tanezaki), a young orphan girl, and marries a beautiful woman named Yor Briar (voiced by Saori Hayami).

Little does he know, but Anya and Yor have secrets of their own: Anya is a mind-reader and Yor is a deadly assassin who is named "Thorn Princess" due to her deadly nature. Despite these dangers, and Loid making decisions which don't always follow common sense, he struggles with juggling the duties of being a caring father, husband, and perfect spy all at the same time.

This plot makes for an enjoyable comedy. Anya is a character that [many can relate to](#) not because of her mind-reading abilities, but her quick wit, flexibility, and love for cartoons. hilariously, the cartoon she loves, *Spy Wars*, resembles what Loid actually does for a living.

In the same way that Carmen Sandiego, in the recent animated series of the same name, is shown to have human limits, Anya, Loid, and Yor are not superhuman. Anya's powers wane during a new moon and crowded places stress her out. Yor can become insecure and has a lack of social skills, leading her work colleagues to bully her. Loid can become physically exhausted from his work, including his cover job as a psychiatrist at a local hospital in the city of Berlint.

All the characters have their own villains which makes *Spy x Family* an intriguing series. Apart from the country's secret police, Loid faces a skeptical brother of Yor, Yuri, who is wholly dedicated to her. Just like the protagonists, Yuri has his own secret. He [masquerades](#) as a diplomat when he is actually a secret police officer. Also, Yor feels threatened by Nightfall, a former apprentice of Loid who has a crush on him, and believes that Loid may leave her for Nightfall. At school, Anya faces challenges from fellow students and instructors.

While each of the characters, especially those in the main cast, have their strong points, Yor [stands out](#) above the others. While she only marries Loid at first as a matter of convenience, as the series goes on, she is further drawn to him, and dedicating herself to him, and Anya. She has a tough and strong nature unlike any other character, which is displayed when her assassin skills are put to use. Like other anime characters, she drinks to calm herself down. In an interesting twist, she can clean well, but cannot cook (unlike Loid), and can be selfless but absent-minded.



Spy x Family is unlike any other spy series I've ever seen. It does not have the combination of comedy, action, and adventure like the classic 2000s Disney series [Kim Possible](#) or similar to the often formulaic, and glitzy, spy fiction *Totally Spies!* This is because Anya, Loid, and Yor are all playing certain roles, either as schoolchildren or parents, to allay any suspicion from who they truly are.

The series has been [positively received](#), with fans engaging [in cosplay](#), and manga editions flying off the shelves. This [popularity](#) has been recognized by the show's producers, who recently renewed the series for a second season and film, which is set to premiere [in 2023](#).

There are many themes in *Spy x Family* that go beyond a focus on spying. For one, human experimentation is an important sub-theme, even more than [occasional mentions](#) of it in the ongoing yuri golf series *Birdie Wing*. For example, Anya detests studying because it was forced upon her when she was a test subject. Furthermore, the family dog, Bond, later adopted by the Forgers, has future vision akin to Garnet in *Steven Universe*, and was also experimented on by humans.

The smoothness of the anime's voice acting, music, and animation make it stand out more than other series which aired this year, such as *Bocchi the Rock!* and [Do it Yourself!!](#). This is unsurprising since the show's director, and writer, Furuhashi, is well-established in the anime

industry. He previously worked on series such as *Rurouni Kenshin*, *Zipang*, *Hunter x Hunter*, *Gunslinger Girl*, and *Le Chevalier D'Eon*.

The show's music is by (K)now Name, a Japanese group known for their work in five other anime, including *Sakura Quest* and *Dorohedoro*. Additionally, the show's voice actors are seasoned. For instance, Eguchi prominently voiced Kazuya Kujo in *Gosick*, while Hayami voiced Yuzuki Shiraishi in *A Place Further than the Universe*. These elements are enhanced by the show's writing.

Spy x Family doesn't have any direct or indirect LGBTQ themes, even it arguably [has queer themes](#), but not queer representation. In this way, it is different from other spy fiction like the 2018 steampunk spy action *Princess Principal*, or the OVA and anime springing from the *Read or Die* light novel and manga. Both have [some indirect yuri themes](#) and subtext.

This series was only rivaled on Crunchyroll by the final season of *Kaguya-sama: Love Is War*, the third season of *Ascendance of a Bookworm*, and new series such as *Love After World Domination*, *Aharen-san wa Hakarenai*, and *Shikimori's Not Just a Cutie*, all of which were well-animated and constructed series. However, *Spy x Family* was the only outright only spy fiction which began during the Spring 2022 [series lineup](#) for the streaming platform. This anime was on par with those series because of its staff, artwork, story, and plot.



Although accurately identifying which anime have the best production values [can be challenging](#) due to a lack of public information, and the fact that having a big budget doesn't "mean that a production ends up looking great", *Spy x Family* is well illustrated, animated, and constructed, meaning that the production value is higher than other series. As such, it is no exaggeration to say this series has [some of the best](#) production values I've ever seen in an anime. This has attracted many fans to the series, [which received](#) some of the best ratings "among all [TV Tokyo] programs on all stations for the July 2022 season".

In Western animation, happy families are often the norm, especially in Disney series. This series stands against that norm. Yor, Loid, and Anya are only together for convenience. They are a chosen or found family, but all feel a connection to each other. This is not unique to this series.

A similar family of sorts exists in the popular isekai *I've Been Killing Slimes for 300 Years and Maxed Out My Level*. The protagonist, Azusa Aizawa, becomes an immortal witch, and has a family of sorts which includes a dragon girl, sentient slime spirits, and a ghost girl. A difference is that *Spy x Family* is more focused on each family member trying to fulfill their societal role, of sorts, and the family in this anime only consists of three people, rather than something larger.

This series bucks the common theme of anime protagonists struggling to do "their best" in school. Such a theme is present in the well-regarded magical girl series *Cardcaptor Sakura* and *Sailor Moon*, but is also often present in Western animations.

In *Spy x Family*, Anya is a terrible student, in part because of human experimentation on her. As a result, she tries to become friends with fellow students to further the "friendship scheme" rather than becoming an Imperial Scholar. Anya is just as bad at academics [as Eve in Birdie Wing](#). However, she has the unique advantage of reading minds and a level of charm that Eve doesn't always have.

Although this series is not as absurd as the overly dramatic golf tournaments in *Birdie Wing*, the interactions between the characters make you invested in them, and want to watch more. This is strengthened through the many comedic moments, either between Loid and Anya, Anya and Yor, or Anya and Bond. As a result, you root for the characters, either when Loid is gathering intelligence for his next mission or when Anya is trying to make friends at school.

The second season of *Spy x Family*, set to air sometime in 2023, along with a film, will likely develop the growing romance between Loid and Yor, the friendships Anya is making at school, and the strained relationship that Damian has with his family. As was the case with the 25-episode first season, all these stories will be intertwined together in some form.

The first season of *Spy x Family* is currently streaming on Hulu and Crunchyroll.

Animation	★★★★★
Voice Acting	★★★★★
Music	★★★★★
Story	★★★★★
5 ★★★★★	

Chapter 5: Skip and Loafer Spoiler-Filled Review



Skip and Loafer is romantic comedy and slice-of-life anime, written and directed by Kotomi Deai. It is based on an ongoing manga series of the same name written and illustrated by Misaki Takamatsu. This animated series was produced by P.A. Works, known for series such as *Canaan*, *Kuromukuro*, *Akiba Maid War*, and *Aquatope on the White Sand*.

This series has a simple storyline. A girl named Mitsumi Iwakura (voiced by Tomoyo Kurosawa) goes to Tsubame West High School, a school in Tokyo, with the goal of becoming a rural planner in her hometown. She leaves her friends, such as Fumino "Fumi" Toyama (voiced by Sumire Morohoshi), behind. While walking to school, Mitsumi believes everything is going her way, but gets lost. She is helped by another student, Sōsuke Shima (voiced by Akinori Egoshi). Somehow, they both get to the opening ceremony just in time, allowing her to give a speech to the incoming class. However, thanks to their fast running, she throws up onto her teacher, earning her the nickname of "barf girl". And that's only the first episode.

Admittedly, I had not originally planned to watch *Skip and Loafer*. Reading Alex Henderson's [review](#) of the first episode for *Anime Feminist*, convinced me otherwise. This view was reinforced by the [spring premiere digest](#) on the same site. It described the series as a "sweet

coming-of-age story" with an anxious, driven, and endearing female protagonist. The review also said the series had a "positively depicted trans guardian" named Nao (voiced by Mitsuki Saiga). After watching all twelve episodes of the first season, I have to agree with their assessment. However, there is a lot more to the show than the assessment by these reviewers.

There are hilarious moments in each episode. This is especially the case when it comes to Mitsumi's antics, or when the reality of people is hidden. This humor is not based off any tropes or common stereotypes. Even so, it makes you empathize with the characters, endear them to you, and make you interested in learning more about them as people.

Unlike other anime I've reviewed this year, *Skip and Loafer* gives its characters depth. In the fourth episode, Mitsumi is told by slacker teacher Hanazono that student council treasurer Tokiko Takamine (voiced by Minami Tsuda) is an organized person. She is impressed and connects with her almost instantly, seeing her as a senpai. Takamine even tells her how to use her time more efficiently.

However, Takamine has anxiety hidden below the surface. She is barely holding it together and even has nightmares about missing the bus or train. I liked that Takamine learns from Mitsumi to not panic if things don't go her way, to accept what is around her, and not be tense all the time. This is something which many people can resonate with.

Somehow, Mitsumi inadvertently causes Takamine's nightmares to disappear. She even influences her to admit that everyone should have their own path and way to use their time. Overall, Takamine is very relatable, as she is generally very organized. In some ways, she reminds me of my own personal organizational habits.

The interactions between Mitsumi and Sōsuke are at the center of *Skip and Loafer*. They learn more about each other and cheer up one another, if one of them feels down. While there are some romantic feelings between them, they are undoubtedly good friends who support each other, even if times get tough. That is part of the great storytelling in this anime.

I further liked the series because it isn't as dramatic like [*Kaguya-sama: Love Is War*](#) or [*Yuri is My Job!*](#). Nor is it idolish like *Alice Gear Aegis Expansion* and *Kizuna no Allele*. Instead, it has a similar same pace, and feel, to [*Kuma Kuma Kuma Bear*](#) or iyashikei series like [*Adachi and Shimamura*](#) and [*Laid-Back Camp*](#). It reminds me a bit of [*K-On!*](#) and *My Roommate Is a Cat* for the same reason. However, it isn't an iyashikei series. There is a focus on the plot, characters, and

worldbuilding. But there isn't an immersive visual setting, meaning that it does not fit the definition of this anime sub-genre.



Slice-of-life series are some of my favorite anime. I still remember fondly watching, apart from those already named, [Azumanga Daioh](#), [Squid Girl](#), [YuruYuri](#), [Kin-iro Mosaic](#), and *Teasing Master Takagi-san*. However, *Skip and Loafer* isn't exactly like those anime. Not is it like [Let's Make a Mug Too](#), [Akebi's Sailor Uniform](#), [Sasaki and Miyano](#), *Gabriel DropOut*, or [Words Bubble Up Like Soda Pop](#). In some ways, this series gives me the same vibes as the first cour of [The Aquatope on White Sand](#), a series also produced by P.A. Works. The second cour of that series had a different tone, as it showed the brutal reality of the workplace and how it can wear you down to nothing.

Skip and Loafer stands out because of the casual queerness shown in the series. This is especially exemplified by Mitsumi's aunt, Nao. I hadn't picked up that she was trans, because it is relatively subtle, until reading [some articles](#) about it. After that, I could recognize it being mentioned throughout the series. Nao appears to be accepted and no one bats an eye about it.

The fact that Nao is trans is as subtle, in some ways, as May Marigold stating openly that she is trans in a Volume 8 episode [of RWBY](#), without specifically using the word "trans". There is some danger in subtlety, as everyone may not recognize it. Some series have done it better than

others. I would say that *Skip and Loafer* does a good job of this, although it would be great to have additional [LGBTQ characters](#).

There is more than casual queerness in *Skip and Loafer*. It is represented by characters that [lean into "common archetypes."](#) Nao experiences transmisogyny and Mitsumi supports her. She cares for Mitsumi deeply. She goes undercover as an "uncle", and is joined by Egashira (voiced by Yuka Terasaki). The latter thinks Sosuke is a "clout-chaser," during Mitsumi's date with Sosuke in the eighth episode. The reality is that Egashira has a crush on him and is jealous.

In that same episode, Mitsumi and her friends come over for a summer outing, a sleepover, allowing them to get even closer than they had before. She tells her friends that Nao is "biologically male" (i.e., trans), to not cause a panic. Thanks to Nao, she knows some make-up language, which gives her a leg up in their conversations. Later, when Egashira tries to leave, Nao convinces her to stay, again showing her role in keeping Mitsumi's friends together.

The bond between Egashira and Nao is strong. In one *Skip and Loafer* episode, Egashira is sad that she can't talk to her at the school festival. This is after both, as noted earlier, bonded when they were spying on Sosuke and Mitsumi, during their date. Hopefully, a second season will expand on their friendship.

One of the most popular ships [among fans](#) is between Mitsumi's two schoolmates, Yuzuki Murashige (voiced by Maaya Uchida) and Makoto Kurume (voiced by Megumi Han), who are opposites from one another. Mitsumi brings them closer together, with fans [praising](#) their romantic "chemistry", including cute interactions.

The implied romantic feelings between Makoto and Yuzuki reaches a high point in the show's 11th episode. Yuzuki puts off a guy who is hitting on her and says that she dislikes it when people praise her art without looking at it deeply. Of course, Makoto does the opposite, praising the art, and makes Yuzuki blush in response.

While some may say their interactions are "yuri-baiting", referring to series which show romantic relationships between girls/women without having that ["relationship come to fruition,"](#) it is [more fair](#) to call it yuri subtext. For one, Makoto and Yuzuki have unresolved feelings for one another and aren't a couple. Their feelings have not been realized. Yuri subtext is all [over the place](#) in anime, from *Magical Girl Lyrical Nanoha* to *Mahou Shoujo Madoka Magica*. It differs from more directly-shown love like that between Anis and Euphie [in *MagiRevo*](#) or one-sided love shown in *Alice Gear Aegis Expansion*.



Mitsumi is a sympathetic character because she isn't good at athletics, like Mako's worries about athletic events. This serves as a way for Mitsumi to bond deeper with Sosuke, who accepts her for who she is. Sports, and their emphasis, are a major part of Japanese culture, like it is in the U.S. Those who [don't conform](#) to the "norm" to be ridiculed. In this series, the difference from the norm is portrayed as acceptable. It is fine to be less social, quiet, and [not like sports](#).

One of the best parts [of *Skip and Loafer*](#) is how Mitsumi connects with her classmates, either Sosuke, Yuzuki, Makoto, or Mika Egashira. The latter is nervous, at first, at interactions with nasty male classmates. She even has a mental list of those who are mean to her and vows revenge on them for what they did to her.

As a result of their friendship, Egashira's attitudes change. Her crush on Sosuke strengthens, even as she feels left behind as Sosuke appears closer to Mitsumi than her. She is hiding inner conflicts and trauma, implying she has low self-worth.

Her desire to go through schooling, to help her hometown of Ikajima, is admirable. Throughout the series, she has a connection to Ikajima since her childhood friend, Fumi still lives in the town. She doesn't have many lines in the series and so few, that no one even bothered to add her to the show's Wikipedia page. She is someone that Mitsumi can vent and talk to. This all comes to a head in the ninth episode when she visits Ikajima and has a fun time with her middle school friends.

The romantic comedy themes of *Skip and Loafer* shine through in the show's sixth episode. Mitsumi begins believing rumors about Sosuke, thinking he is a "bad boy" who skipped school and faked being sick. After he tells her to [not believe the rumors](#), she realizes that she is in love with him, and tells Fumi she feels the same way about Sosuke as Fumi did about her friend as well.

This plot is interlaced with Mitsumi's work in the school's student council. She becomes the student council secretary alongside Takamine. She encourages the latter to work with the new president-elect, Hiroto Kazakami (voiced by Junya Enoki), telling her that all we can do is hope it pays off some day. This is diametrically opposed to what is shown [in *Ippon Again!*](#), that hard work can lead to success. This idea has been questioned in recent years.

Not everything is puppies and roses in this series. This is made clear when Ririka Saijou (voiced by Minako Kotobuki) comes out of nowhere at the end of the seventh episode. She is said to be a "childhood friend" of Sosuke. Ririka is more than that. She is a model who sneers at Mitsumi, calling her a "circus act". She even declares that he can't have a high school life because of an incident four years before in which he, apparently, showed bad judgment. In essence, she blackmails him.

This doesn't stop the growing romance between Mitsumi and Sosuke, however. In fact, in the ninth episode, she expresses her enthusiasm, and gives him three squid crackers from her hometown, because she feels bad for him. Although he feels he doesn't "deserve anything", their interaction brings a smile to his face. As such, *Skip and Loafer* is saying that rather than beating ourselves up over our mistakes, we should take chances instead.



The last three episodes are some of the strongest in the entire series. While the preparation for a school festival is not a new plot in anime, the play is pertinent in today's world that reactionaries are stronger than ever. It is about a person who falls in love with fascists and joins them because of romance, even turning on his own family!

Some Jewish fans have [even stated](#) that anime has a "Nazi problem" and is [anti-Semitic](#) due to *Attack on Titan*, *Angel Cop*, *Fullmetal Alchemist*, *Hellsing*, and *Jojo's Bizarre Adventure*, and *Hetalia: Axis Powers* characters. These views remain controversial, with the argument that Western viewers are [misinterpreting](#) plotlines through a distorted lens.

Back to *Skip and Loafer*, Sosuke's role as a friend shines through. He cheers up Mitsumi, thinking back to his bad childhood, and tries to make sure Mitsumi doesn't hurt herself. They end up talking and having a fun time together. Understandably, Mitsumi feels bad that she allowed Sosuke to be picked for the play. After all, he didn't want an acting role. Again, this shows the power of peer pressure and "need" to be socially accepted. In fact, Sosuke worries that people only see him one way and he can't do anything to "ruin" that perception.

Sosuke ends up shining through, in the 11th episode. He does an amazing performance, impressing his half-brother Keiri and his mother. He ends up enjoying himself. The series says that he should be grateful to his brother, who has been considerate of him, rather than dismissive. However, Ririka's arrival threatens to destroy it all!

The *Skip and Loafer* series finale brings this to a head. In an act of intimidation, Ririka falsely accuses Sosuke's mother of making Sosuke act for her again. This causes Sosuke's mother, and Keiri, to leave. Even so, Mitsumi bravely defends Sosuke from Ririka, standing between them both, like an anteater. As a result, Sosuke realizes he can act for himself, rather than doing it for others. He is comforted when he forgets his lines at the end of the school play.

In one of the most powerful scenes in the entire series, Sosuke stands up for himself. He says that he can't make up for what he did to Ririka. Even so, he refuses to follow the same self-destructive path as her, noting that he is enjoying school life. As an olive branch, he offers to do anything to help her move on. Predictably, Ririka is infuriated.

She lashes out, declaring that Sosuke is selfish and narcissistic, and says the same about his mother. She doesn't want him to get his life back and wants to continue manipulating him. As a result, she pushes him away, arguing that Sosuke and his mother can do what they want, but to not show his face to her again. After he thanks her, this shocks her to the core.

Although the series finale might be beginning [the "redemption"](#) of Ririka, she is not a sympathetic character. Her pity crying and admission that the scandal, and losing her job, was partially her fault (rather than Sosuke), makes her toxicity that much worse. She is an awful character who treats others poorly. Even her friend, Chris Fukunaga (voiced by Yuusuke Nagano), tells her to not guilt-trip Sosuke. He adds that it is her sole fault her grades sucked. Whether she reforms herself, [takes responsibility](#) for her actions, [understands](#) her harm, and doesn't [cause](#) any further harm, or not, hopefully she is out of Sosuke's life for good.

The *Skip and Loafer* series finale wraps up loose ends. President Hiroto gets more depth. He tells Takamine that he was expected to be the best from an early age. His family had high standards for success. This causes Takamine to develop a crush. As the school festival ends, there is a touching scene in which Sosuke and Mitsumi realize how much they mean to one another. Mitsumi is undoubtedly more in love with him than ever. She closes out the episode, encapsulating her story of wanting to become a government official in her hometown, and how she got there.



The show's colorful and vibrant animation really sticks with you. Some series are flat and don't have expressive animation. *Skip and Loafer* is the exact opposite of that and has a distinct art style. As such, the series is that much more appealing.

The same can be said for the series' voice actors. The voices of Mitsumi, Sumi, Sosuke, and Nao, who are Tomoyo Kurosawa, Sumire Morohoshi, Akinori Egoshi, and Mitsuki Saiga respectfully, are talented. Kurosawa is known for her roles in *Cutie Honey Universe*, *Astra Lost in Space*, *BanG Dream!*, and *Wandering Witch: The Journey of Elaina*.

Morohoshi lent her voice to characters in series such as *Princess Jellyfish*, *Little Witch Academia*, and *Violet Evergarden*. Egoshi has voiced characters in *Shirobako*, *Kino's Journey: The Beautiful World*, *Fruits Basket*, and many others. Saiga is known for roles in *Cowboy Bebop*, *R.O.D the TV*, [Maria Watches Over Us](#), *Ouran High School Host Club*, and [Yurikuma Arashi](#).

Minami Tsuda, Yuka Terasaki, Maaya Uchida, and Megumi Han, who voice Takamine, Egashira, Yuzuki, and Makoto, have done many recognizable roles. Tsuda voiced Mei Aihara in the [ever-controversial](#) *Citrus*, Terasaki voiced Babel in *Gargantia* and Akari Hyūga [in Bloom Into You](#), and Uchida lent her voice to Sharo Kirima in [Is the Order a Rabbit?](#), Catarina Claes in [My Next Life as a Villainess: All Routes Lead to Doom!](#), and countless others.

Han has voiced characters in series such as *Komi Can't Communicate*, *RWBY: Ice Queendom*, *The Dangers in My Heart*, and *Oshi no Ko*. Junya Enoki and Minako Kotobuki, the

voices of Hiroto and Ririka, are known for roles in anime such as *Heroines Run the Show*, *Wandering Son*, and *Your Lie in April*.

The last frame of the final *Skip and Loafer* episode says, "see you tomorrow", implying a possible continuation. If a second season for the series was ordered, which [is unlikely](#), romance between Sosuke and Mitsumi will blossom. The same may be the case for the bond between Makoto and Yuzuki, possible growing feelings that Takamine has for Hiroto, and other relationships between characters. In the process, Mitsumi's trans aunt, Nao, will likely have a significant role.

Skip and Loafer can be streamed on Crunchyroll and is available for purchase on Prime Video.

Animation	★★★★★
Voice Acting	★★★★★
Story	★★★★★
Music	★★★★★
5	
★★★★★	

Chapter 6: Oshi no Ko Spoiler-Filled Review



Oshi no Ko, also known as "My Favorite Idol" or "Their Idol's Children", is an anime which mixes the supernatural, mystery, idol, and drama genres. Daisuke Hiramaki directs this series, which is based on an 11-volume manga written by Aka Akasaka. This series is produced by Doga Kobo, a studio founded in July 1973. As a warning, this review will discuss suicide, cyberbullying, death, murder, and other related themes.

This series is intriguing from the get-go. It follows the life of Gorou Amemiya (voiced by Takeo Ōtsuka). Gorou is a doctor in a remote region and is murdered by a mysterious man. He is reborn as the child named Aquamarine "Aqua" Hoshino (voiced by Yumi Uchiyama) of his beloved Japanese pop idol, Ai Hoshino (voiced by Rie Takahashi). He adapts to this new life. His sister Ruby Hoshino (voiced by Yurie Igoma) is a reincarnated version of his former patient, Sarina Tendōji (voiced by Tomoyo Takayanagi). Their life is challenging. Ai cannot publicly reveal she has children and Aqua meets a child actress, Kana Arima (voiced by Megumi Han), who vows to be his rival. Disaster strikes when the same stalker who killed Gorou and Sarina mortally wounds Ai. This leads Aqua to begin a quest to find his father and kill him in revenge.

The above is only what happens in the first episode! I was drawn to *Oshi no Ko* in part because it is based on the reality of the Japanese entertainment industry. It is somewhere where

are, [according to Akasaka](#), no "union[s] for talent and writers...no guarantees...[and] opportunities...given based on the balance of power between companies." The idol world is portrayed in a dramatic and dark way. This series [shows how](#) the women's emotions and labor are so commodified that they internalize it. In addition, this series makes clear how the idol industry exploits those in vulnerable situations.

This stands in contrast to the many idolish anime [out there](#), whether *Kizuna no Allele*, and those which have aired [in previous years](#), such as *If My Favorite Pop Idol Made It to the Budokan*, *Shine Post*, *Cue!*, *22/7*, *BanG Dream!*, *Macross Delta*, and *Macross Frontier*. Also, this is the case for the idolish [D4DJ](#) and *Alice Gear Aegis Expansion*, and the [multiple series](#) in the *Love Live!* franchise.

Oshi no Ko is one of the only series which focuses on the dark side (and reality) of being an idol. Another example [is Heroines Run the Show](#). In that romantic idolish series, the protagonists must deal with rabid fans, rumors, violations of privacy, being marketed and commercialized, and harsh working conditions. This is also the case for Hiyori Suzumi, a first-year student who comes to a Tokyo school for track-and-field, who helps the idols as an apprentice manager.

The second episode of *Oshi no Ko* brings all these themes to the fore. Ruby attempts to join a huge idol group. Her brother, Aqua, tries to dissuade her, telling her about the disrespect, low pay, and violation of privacy for those within the industry. In a strange effort to "protect" his sister, Aqua engineers something. He works with the director he is working under, Takashi, so it appears that she is "rejected" from the talent pool. At the episode's end, Miyako, the mother-of-sorts of Aqua and Ruby, re-opens the idol department of Strawberry Productions, becoming their manager.

By the second episode's end, it seemed that the story focused more on Aqua than Ruby, despite Ruby, Miyako, and Kana as important characters. There [should be equal weight](#) to both of their stories. This changes in later episodes. Kana becomes more involved in the life of Aqua, even following him to Takashi's apartment. At one point, she reveals to him that she is holding back her acting so that she doesn't outshine others.

The attempts of Aqua to learn more about the lives of his mother, leads him down a strange path. He joins the cast of a hastily produced reality dating show, *My Love with a Star Begins Now*. It is directed by Masaya Kaburagi (voiced by Masaki Terasoma). He does a paternity test and discovers Kburagi is not related to Ai whatsoever. All the while, the series makes clear its

social commentary. Storyboarders are shown sleeping on the floor to get their work done. Popular actors are brought on the dating show to gain viewers. Manga artists note their disappointment at adaptations of their work.

This all becomes intertwined. Aqua invites Kana to be part of Strawberry Productions. His sister Ruby sees [idol potential](#) in her. There are romantic vibes between Aqua and Kana. Also, Ruby and Kana are drawn close together due to their roles in the same company. Their idol group takes the name of B Komichi. It is the same name of the group headed Ai before her tragic death. Unlike other series, the close relationship between Ruby and Kana doesn't seem to be romantic.



By the show's sixth episode, female characters have a much bigger role. For instance, Kana and Ruby are [closer together](#). The former tells the latter about egosurfing and how fans and content they consume is in a "state of mutual surveillance". She further argues that people in showbusiness are the content. She even admits that she holds her tongue so that she doesn't create flame wars online about certain topics. The friendship between Kana and Ruby is one of the best parts of this series.

Women on the reality dating show, such as Akane Kurokawa (voiced by Manaka Iwami), get ample screentime. In the latter case, she claims she is vegetarian so that she won't eat meat. It appears to be a ruse to get to her the "correct" weight and shape, and takes notes on what do for

the show. This comes to a head in the sixth episode, when Akane ends up attacking another actress, Yuki, for not standing out.

Following this, they hug it out, and everything seems solved. Online fans take issue with the scene, causing [a firestorm of criticism](#), even [after](#) Akane apologizes. The toxicity of the internet echo machine is clearly shown. Akane becomes terrified, with people even angry at her at school. She makes this worse for herself when she reads negative comments and [begins spiraling](#). This reaches [such a fever pitch](#) that she [attempts suicide](#). She is only saved, at the last second, by Aqua.

This episode resulted in controversy. Fans were [reportedly](#) shocked. Kyoko Kimura, [mother](#) of Hana Kimura, a Japanese pro wrestler, who recently died from suicide, also criticized the series. She said she didn't approve of the anime's writers using Kyoko's death as "[free source material](#)." She [argued](#) there wasn't proper consideration before the series release. Later, she claimed the series causes cyberbullying victims to suffer, while acknowledging the series "raises important issues".

The [criticism by Kyoko Kimura](#), and others, makes perfect sense. The episode seems to have parallels to the case of Hana Kimura. That it [may be triggering](#) to some people, especially when it comes [to cyberbullying](#). The manga's chapters [were planned](#) prior to Kimura's passing. The creators could not control when the series was released. The [manga's](#) author, Aka Akasaka, said he wanted people to know how young talent is [being "hurt](#), exploited, and suffering". He added that he focused on the reality of the Japanese entertainment industry. His words fit with the anime's criticism of toxic fandoms and fans.

The *Oshi no Ko* staff should have reached out to her before the series aired and could have handled this with more care. [The episode](#) shows how young people can be pushed to the brink. Suicides have been on the rise, especially among Japanese women, and declining among Japanese men. Over 20,000 in Japan end their lives every year, often due to economic hardships, a number [which increased](#) due to the coronavirus pandemic. In comparison, [over 40,000 Americans](#) take their lives each year, with a total of 800,000 between the years [of 2000 and 2020](#), with men representing over 78% of the victims.

This series is not unique in focusing on this theme. In the ever-controversial and ridiculed *gen:LOCK*, all the protagonists give up their lives [in "ascension"](#) to become swarms of nano-particles known as the Flow. More recently, [in Volume 9 of RWBY](#), the subject is treated more

respectfully. One of the protagonists, Ruby Rose, either engaged in a suicide attempt, or ended her life. It appears to be the former rather than the latter.

Coming back to *Oshi no Ko*, the seventh episode caps this "dark chapter" for Akane. It makes clear that someone's mental state can push them toward suicide. Kana admits to Ruby, in the same episode, that she even thinks of ending her life some days! Ruby observes that lying is the best way to protect yourself. In her view, every day people are bullied online in the "name of justice and freedom of expression". Following her rescue, Akane's mother and fellow cast members embrace her. This proves that she is not alone and has a support network to support her. There is a slight criticism of the police. A police officer asks Akane if she is ok after she is saved by Aqua, but not before.

The same episode shows that Aqua cares about Akane. While it appears weird that he reveals that Akane attempted suicide, he also pushes to release footage taken by the production staff of the scene between Akane and Yuki, showing the reality of the situation: that the staff selectively manipulated the scene. This means the reality dating show is rotten at the core. Aqua's actions, in coordination with the rest of the crew, change the image of Akane online, solidify her popularity, and cause criticism of her to disappear.

Not everything is that simple in *Oshi no Ko*. Aqua admits that the only girl he likes is Ai to the other cast members. This solidifies the determination of Akane to become Ai. She even goes to the National Diet Library, learning more about her, and embodies her. This, predictably, surprises, and terrifies Aqua, as he senses that she has Ai's spirit within her.



There is more than [a popular](#) opening song, an [incredible debut](#), and [amazing art](#) in the manga (which [the anime](#) is based on). In the eighth episode shows the protagonists, Akane, and others, have important character development. Akane gives off a charisma and magnetism which draws people to her. In fact, Aqua even reveals his true colors when he will only listen to Akane, and not to what others are saying. Like Aqua, Ruby sees the spirit of Ai within Akane.

Jealousy comes to the forefront. Kana is angry at Aqua for getting close to other female cast members on the reality dating show. She is caught off guard when they both skip school. They play a game of catch in the park. On some level, Aqua probably has feelings for Kana. He tells her that he has crushes on all girls his age, but prefers older girls. Later, Kana calls for him to "drop dead" and calls him "big jerk" for kissing Akane on the reality dating show. She wants him to kiss her instead.

The [eighth episode](#) of *Oshi no Ko* predicts what will happen [in the future](#): the "boundary" between his former self, and Aqua, will vanish. As such, he will become one person and his former memories may fade. In fact, he states that his mind is suiting his body and environment, with his thinking influenced by his physical development.

Aqua sees Akane as someone he can use, declaring that she knows more about the personality of Ai than him, even though Ai was his mom. He even agrees to let them be "dating" on paper, until they decide to amicably end it. This is expanded upon in the season one finale.

Aqua often uses people for his own ends, which fits with who his character is, but also justifies his manipulation and almost makes it seem acceptable. It is disturbing, especially since such manipulation was criticized [in *Tokyo Mew Mew New*](#). It aired at the same time as this series. That series featured a character who engages in multiple creepy romantic advances toward the protagonist.

Through it all, Aqua learns more about his mom from Masaya Kaburagi, who says that the entertainment industry is a place for bluffing and lies. He notes that Ai began as a "country bumpkin fresh out of the sticks", lacked professionalism, and would show up to work in cheap clothes. He implies that Ai fell in love while at a certain theater company and got the face of a "grown woman" as a result. Like the rest of the series, there is a criticism of the Japanese entertainment industry as a "place of creating and calling in obligations" between agencies and production, which plays a "big role in casting".

The ninth episode is one of the best episodes of *Oshi no Ko*. Aqua pushes the idol department in Strawberry Productions to new heights. He invites Mem (voiced by Rumi Okubo), a cast member from the reality sating show and a well-known YouTuber, to join. In a possible commentary on fudgery in the Japanese entertainment industry, Meme admits she is not honest about her age. She had been saying she is seven years younger than her actual age! Her honesty leads Kana and Ruby to sympathize with her. In a likely incorrect observation, Ruby believes that this shows Aqua's preference in women.

The formation of the B Komichi idol group in the ninth episode, with planning for a music video and choreography for dances, is the beginning of further comments on the idol industry. Before this point, the series had only been idolish. After this episode, it becomes more of an idol anime. Kana, for her part, thinks she can't be as good of an idol as Mem and Ruby. She even believes that she can't head the group, or be "the center," and is "bad" at singing. The latter is a lie.

The same episode of *Oshi no Ko* raises the possibility that Masaya will have a bigger role in the future. He is taking the long game of making an alliance with Aqua, to giving him a leg up in future battles over casting, and sees potential in Mem and Kana. He even believes that B Komichi is a promising investment. This comes to fruition in the 10th episode. Aqua dresses up as Pieyon to inspire the members of B Komichi. He talks to Kana. She is worried about being the group's center.

I found the 10th and 11th episodes to be the strongest because they focused on female characters like Kana, Mem, and Ruby, rather than Aqua. Aqua is a creepy and disturbing character, who is not very relatable. He manipulates others to achieve his goal of finding out more about his birth father, who paid off someone else to kill his mother. This isn't the case for the female characters. Maybe Aqua is despicable on purpose.

I liked the focus on Kana and her internal struggle. She worries that everyone sees a former child actor, rather than an idol. Ruby reminds Kana that they are rookie idols, will fall down and fail sometimes, but that this is okay. Ruby relates to Kana even more than Mem, noting how she was once as an idol otaku and that Aqua's previous incarnation was her first love. The latter is [a strange](#) and cringeworthy. Such incestual romantic love is deeply problematic.



The 10th episode of *Oshi no Ko* continues the commentary about the Japanese idol industry. Their manager, Miyako, words ring true. In the next scene, the underground idol groups are shown to be treated terribly: they are crammed into one room. More well-known idols get their own changing rooms.

Kana's insecurity on the Star Stage, performing with Mem and Ruby, is front and center. Many audience members have yellow or red glowsticks, representing fans of Mem or Ruby. She sees no one with white glowsticks, representing her fans. Aqua comes to save the day. He waves

yellow, red, and white glowsticks at the same time. This inspires her to outshine Mem and Ruby on stage.

The season one finale of *Oshi no Ko* makes the romantic feelings between Kana and Aqua clear. He claims he only dressed up as Pieyon to ensure their performance was a success, but hints at romantic feelings. Ruby notes that when he is with Kana, he is like his "old self". Their connection is further buttressed by Aqua admitting to his manager/mom-of-sorts, Miyako, that he only has a "work relationship" with Akane. Mem realizes this means that Kana has feelings for Aqua.

The conflict for the [next season](#) is set in motion. Aqua, Kana, and Akane are cast in a stage adaptation of the *Tokyo Blade*. All three are in a love triangle. Kana and Akane have a long-standing rivalry. Akane feels that Kana took away "her" parts. Aqua sees the play as a way to learn more about his birth father. The Lala Lai theater company, where his mother Ai got her start, is putting on the production. He declares that he will find his father, who works in the entertainment industry. It is not known if he would kill his father after he found him.

A love triangle in *Oshi no Ko* isn't surprising. Aka Akasaka, the manga's author, also wrote *Kaguka-Sama: Love is War* manga. He has written other manga, such as *Sayonara Piano Sonata*, *Ib: Instant Bullet*, and *Ren'ai Daikō*, since 2011. None of those have anime adaptations. *Kaguka-Sama* had no love triangles, from what I remember. That series focuses on a wealthy girl (Kaguya Shinomiya) trying to confess her love for the school's student council president (Miyuki Shirogane). Then they try to figure out how to advance their relationship following their romantic confessions.

Oshi no Ko has dark, mature, and depressing themes. As such, I would not rewatch it. Even so, it has value in terms of its social commentary on the Japan's entertainment industry, especially related to idols. On the other hand, it does not represent idol anime.

The series is idolish. It becomes more of an idol anime as it moves forward. However, it does not criticize or mimic any of the tropes in idol anime. It is more about the exploitation that those who work in the industry endure rather than [subverting tropes](#) in other anime. Some online fans don't realize the latter and think this series "defines" idol anime. Nothing could be further from the truth. I can understand why some people don't want to watch this series and can't blame them, as the series is [a lot to take in](#).

I was familiar with some of the voice actors. Rie Takahashi is known for voicing Aileen Lauren Dautriche in *I'm the Villainess, So I'm Taming the Final Boss*, Megumin in *KonoSuba*, Ena Saitō in *Laid Back Camp*, and Takagi-san in *Teasing Master Takagi-san*. The same is the case for Yumi Uchiyama. She voiced Shino Natsume [in Ippon Again!](#). Kent Itō voices Hiroataka Nifuji in the enjoyable romantic comedy, *Wotakoi: Love is Hard for Otaku*.

I recognized Lynn as the voice of Karin Kudaka in *The Aquatope on White Sand*, Sanya in [Kuma Kuma Kuma Bear](#), and Shirara Tsubaki in *My Master Has No Tail*. Manaka Iwami had previously lent her voice to Christina in *Love Live! Nijigasaki High School Idol Club*, Euphylla Magenta in [The Magical Revolution of the Reincarnated Princess and the Genius Young Lady](#), and Millie [in Spy x Family](#). She will also voice Sakuna Memoir in *The Vexations of a Shut-In Vampire Princess*. Megumi Han voiced Penny Polendina in *RWBY: Ice Queendom* and Momo in *Vampire in the Garden*. Tomoyo Takayanagi previously voiced Mikan Hinatsuki [in The Demon Girl Next Door](#). I wasn't familiar with Takeo Ōtsuka, Yurie Igoma, Rumi Okubo, and the many other voice actors for this series.

Although Akasaka has stated that he will no longer draw manga, and will only write instead, considering the manga has 11 volumes at present, there is a lot of material to pull from. As a person who often watches anime which are 12 or 13 episodes, or Western animated series which are even longer, the first season seemed short. It could have been longer.

As I noted in [my Otaku Elf review](#), summarizing [an article](#) in *Anime News Network*, companies often try to limit corporate risk by planning for each season to have between 11 and 13 episodes, but if a show is successful, there can be additional seasons. This happened with *Birdie Wing* and it [is the case for Oshi no Ko](#).

The latter is no surprise as each one had a lot of fan interest. I hope that the second season is even stronger than the first one, with more character development and focus on the female characters instead of the male ones. If the series moves toward an incestual relationship between Aqua and Ruby, as is reportedly in the manga, that will ruin the entire series. Hopefully, the writers know better than to incorporate that into a second season/cour.

Oshi no Ko is currently streaming on HIDIVE.

Animation	★★★★★
Voice Acting	★★★★★
Music	★★★★★
Story	★★★★☆
<div>4.5</div> <div>★★★★☆</div>	

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Concluding Words

After putting this together, I am inspired to continue writing reviews of anime series. In fact, I have a review on *Yohane the Parhelion: Sunshine in the Mirror* that I'm working on, and will later be writing reviews of *The Family Circumstances of the Imbalanced Witch*, *Stardust Telepath*, *The Vexations of a Shut-In Vampire Princess*, and *Soaring Sky! Pretty Cure*.

- Burkely

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